

Frequently Asked Questions About License Renewal

IMPORTANT: Your Licensed Practical Nurse License expires **10/31/2013**. Your renewal and supporting documentation **must be postmarked on or before 10/31/2013** to avoid expired status. If your renewal is postmarked after 10/31/13, we will not process it. You will have to reinstate your license if you do not renew by 10/31/13.

RENEWAL APPLICATIONS/PROCEDURE

Q. If my renewal application is postmarked October 31 can I work on November 1?

A. Your application has to be received in sufficient time to process your renewal. Waiting until the last minute we cannot guarantee your application will be processed by November 1. You need to allow sufficient time for our office to receive AND process your application. If your application is not processed by 10/31/13, your license will expire. You CAN NOT work on an expired license, so be sure to plan ahead.

- If you mail your application before October 31, but not in sufficient time for our office to process your application, your license will expire on November 1. However, since your application was received before the October 31 deadline, it will be renewed.
- If your application is postmarked after October 31, your license will expire and you will have to reinstate it and pay the reinstatement fee.
- Applications are processed in the order they are received, both online and by mail.
- We may receive hundreds of renewals a day, so sending the renewal application by mail the last few days of the renewal period may not be sufficient time for processing and put you at risk for license expiration.
- When you renew online, our staff still have to process your application, though it is much quicker than paper. So if you renew online just before the October 31 deadline, there is a chance it will not be renewed prior to November 1 and will expire. It will be renewed in the order it was received.
- Renewing at midnight the last day prior to expiration does not guarantee a license to work on November 1.

Q. Can I fill out my renewal forms online and then send in a check to pay my renewal fee?

A. No. You must pay your renewal fee with a credit or debit card at the time you renew online. Credit and debit card payments are made through our secure site. If you do not enter a credit card number, your renewal will not be processed. If you wish to use a check to pay your renewal fee, you will need to complete a printed renewal form and mail it together with your check. Mailing the renewal form and the check separately makes it very difficult for us to match the check to the renewal form and will likely result in your renewal form being returned to you for non-payment.

Q. As a member of the military, am I eligible for a fee waiver?

A. If you have served in the regular Armed Forces of the United States, during part of the twenty-four (24) months immediately preceding the biennial renewal date, and wish to waive the renewal fee, you must submit documentation of your military orders **BEFORE PROCEEDING**. You may scan and email to dhhs.licensureunit@nebraska.gov or fax to (402)-471-3577, or mail to Licensure Unit, PO Box 94986, Lincoln, NE 68509-4986. Please be sure to include your name, profession, license number, and email address in the fax, email, or written correspondence. If you have any questions, please contact the Licensure Unit by email, at dhhs.licensureunit@nebraska.gov.

Q. How do I place my license on inactive status?

A. There are three ways to place your license on inactive status: 1). You may select the inactive option on the online renewal form, 2) Submit a written request to our office with your name and license number, 3). Submit a paper renewal form and select "inactive". There is NO charge for this. However, should you wish to reinstate your license in the future, you will be required to meet the renewal continuing competency requirements and pay the reinstatement fee.

Q. What is the difference between expiration and inactive status?

A. Inactive status means you are not practicing as a nurse, but may represent yourself as an inactive nurse. An expired license means you have no credential because the active license lapsed. Both inactive or expired nurses can NOT practice nursing. Both inactive and expired nurses must go through the reinstatement process to make their license active again.

Q. If I live in another compact state, but I work for the federal government can I renew my Nebraska License?

A. Yes, but you cannot renew online. You will need to download a renewal form from our website or request that we mail you a paper renewal form, complete the form and mail it to us along with your check. The license you will be issued will be a single-state Nebraska license. In other words, the license you will be issued will not allow you to practice in other compact states (unless you work in a federal facility in the other state).

Q. If I renew online, how do I change the name on my nursing license?

A. If you answered "Yes" to the question "Do you want a name change?" during the online renewal, your license renewal will be put on hold until we receive a copy of your marriage certificate, page from your divorce decree restoring your previous name or other official document so we can change your name on your record. If you do not submit documents within 10 business days of submitting your online renewal, your license will be renewed with the name currently on your record.

Q. I am not a U.S. Citizen, what do I need to submit with my renewal?

A. If you are NOT a citizen of the United States, you must submit evidence of lawful admittance/presence with may include a copy of:

- 1). A Green Card, otherwise known as a Permanent Resident Card (Form I-551), both front and back of the card; or
- 2). Unexpired foreign passport with an unexpired Temporary I-551 stamp bearing the same name as the passport; or
- 3). A document showing an Alien Registration Number ("A#"), an Employment Authorization Card/Document is **NOT** acceptable; or
- 4). A Form I-94 (Arrival Departure Record) and Visa status.

****An F1 visa alone is not sufficient for renewal.****

If you are not a U.S. citizen, we cannot finish processing your renewal until the appropriate documentation has been received and reviewed by our office. If you do not submit this additional documentation by the expiration date (10/31/2012), your license will not be renewed.

CONVICTIONS/DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Q. What should I submit if I was convicted of a misdemeanor or felony during this renewal (11/1/2011 to 10/31/2013) and I have not previously reported it to the State?

A. Before your renewal will be processed, please submit by mail the following documents to our office (Please include your name and license number):

- * A list of any misdemeanor or felony convictions;
- * A copy of the court record relating to such convictions;
- * Explanation from the applicant of the events leading to the conviction (what, when, where, why) and a summary of actions the applicant has taken to address the behaviors/actions related to the convictions;
- * If currently serving a probation, submit a letter from the probation officer addressing probationary conditions and current status; and
- * All addiction/mental health evaluations and proof of treatment if the conviction involved a drug and/or alcohol related offense and if treatment was obtained and/or required.

Q. What should I submit if my license(s) in another jurisdiction was denied, refused renewal, or disciplined during this renewal (11/1/2011 to 10/31/2013) and I have not previously reported it to the State?

A. Before your renewal will be processed, please submit by mail an official copy of the disciplinary action, including charges and disposition. Please include your name and Nebraska license number. If your license was disciplined by Nebraska, you do not need to submit any documents.

Q. Do I need to submit anything if I have already reported my conviction(s) or disciplinary actions(s) to the State?

A. No, you do not need to submit the documents again if you have already reported the conviction or disciplinary action to our Investigations Division.

CONTINUING COMPETENCY

Q. I was just issued my license, do I still need to meet the continuing competency requirements?

A. Yes. Everyone is expected to meet the continuing competency requirements to renew their license, regardless of when their license was issued. Depending on when you graduated from nursing school, you may not need to meet all of the continuing competency requirements (see below).

Q. If I graduated in the last five years do I need to meet the continuing competency requirements?

A. It depends

* If you graduated on or after November 1, 2011, your graduation meets the continuing competency requirement for this renewal.

* If you graduated between November 1, 2008 and October 31, 2011, you must have completed 20 hours of continuing education between November 1, 2011 and October 31, 2013. Of the 20 hours, at least 10 must be peer reviewed. (See below).

* If you graduated prior to November 1, 2008, you must have practiced 500 hours between November 1, 2008 and October 31, 2013 and completed 20 hours of continuing education between November 1, 2010 and October 31, 2013. Of the 20 hours, at least 10 hours must be peer reviewed.

Q. I completed a refresher course on or after November 1, 2008, do I need to obtain continuing education or practice hours?

A. No, successful completion of the refresher course within the last five years meets the continuing competency requirement for this renewal.

Q. What about life-support courses? Is there a limit to the number of hours I can use from these courses?

A. You are limited to no more than 4 hours from CPR and BLS (combined). Other life support courses, such as ACLS, NALS, PALS, are not limited, however many are no longer peer-reviewed.

Q. How many contact hours can I use from the Internet or other home-study offerings?

A. There is no limit. You can now obtain all of your contact hours from the Internet or other home-study courses. However, 10 contact hours must be peer reviewed offerings.

Q. What are peer reviewed courses?

A. Peer reviewed courses are programs, offerings and independent study courses that are either provided by an approved provider or approved by an accredited approval body. Peer reviewed continuing education involves the participation of colleagues in the nursing profession to develop and/or evaluate the learning activities and ensures the credibility of the education.

- One of the most common source of approval for peer reviewed courses is the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) and their approved providers and Boards of Nursing that approve courses.
- Courses offered by academic programs are also considered peer reviewed.
- In-service education offered by an employer may or may not be peer reviewed. You should ask your employer if the program was approved for contact hours.
- Usually peer reviewed education says “this course has been approved for _ hours of continuing nursing education by _____” It will usually say in the course description and/or on the certificate, and the provider of the education should be listed as “an approved provider of continuing nursing education.”
- IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to make sure your continuing education is quality, nursing related and has an adequate amount of hours of peer-reviewed courses. If you are audited, you will need to provide proof of this to the board.

Q. I took a three semester hour course. How many contact hours can I count for this course?

A. A semester hour is 15 contact hours. Your three-semester hour course would be equal to 45 contact hours. Some academic courses are quarter hours. One academic quarter hour equals 10 contact hours. Academic courses taken count, if they are nursing related, and/or you are currently enrolled in a nursing program.

Q. How do I know if the continuing education course I took will be accepted by the State?

A. First, make sure your continuing education is NURSING related. Our website is a great resource for determining whether the course you took counts as acceptable nursing continuing education. Please click here:

http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/Pages/crl_nursing_rn-lpn_ce.aspx

From the Regulations Governing the Practice of Nursing:

101-004 CONTINUING COMPETENCY

101-004.01 For purposes of license renewal, the applicant must document continuing competency by having:

1. Graduated from an approved nursing program within the previous two years;
2. Graduated from an approved nursing program in more than two but less than five years AND have completed 20 contact hours of inservice/continuing education within the last two years;
3. Practiced nursing for a minimum of 500 hours within the last five years AND have completed 20 contact hours of inservice/continuing education within the last two years;
4. Completed a Board-approved review course of study consisting of a minimum of 75 contact hours approved by the Board within the last five years;

5. Obtained/maintained current certification in a nursing specialty granted by a nationally recognized certifying organization; or
6. Developed and maintained a portfolio that includes the licensee's current continuing competency goals and evidence/verification of professional activities to meet those goals. Such evidence may include, but not be limited to, specialized training or experiences, continuing education, employer performance evaluation, or other evidence of demonstrated competency.

Q. What does it mean to have “developed and maintained a portfolio”?

A. A portfolio is a systematic accumulation of professional documents that have been acquired over the years of practicing nursing. It would include your continuing competency goals and evidence or verification of professional activities to meet those goals. Such evidence may include, but not be limited to, a resume, college transcripts, goals and objectives related to professional development that have been completed or working toward, specialized training or experiences, continuing education that is evidence of lifelong learning, employer performance evaluation, specialized training or experiences, volunteer or community service or other evidence of demonstrated competency.

Q. Do I need to send in my practice records and my continuing education certificates with my renewal application?

A. No, you do not need to send in your practice records or continuing education certificates to renew your license. After the renewal period, a percentage of licensees will be selected at random to be audited. If you receive an audit notice, you will be required to send in documentation that verifies that you have met the continuing competency requirements.

Q. What constitutes practice hours?

A. Practice hours are the time you spend working in nursing, whether paid or volunteer. This is up to you to keep track of volunteer practice hours and have verification, or be able to provide verification from an employer, should you be audited. The practice hours requirement pertains to NURSING practice, and ensures you maintain competency to be licensed. The definition of nursing practice from the practice act is as follows:

38-2210. Practice of nursing, defined. Practice of nursing means the performance for compensation or gratuitously of any act expressing judgment or skill based upon a systematized body of nursing knowledge. Such acts include the identification of and intervention in actual or potential health problems of individuals, families, or groups, which acts are directed toward maintaining health status, preventing illness, injury, or infirmity, improving health status, and providing care supportive to or restorative of life and well-being through nursing assessment and through the execution of nursing care and of diagnostic or therapeutic regimens prescribed by any person lawfully authorized to prescribe. Each nurse is directly accountable and responsible to the consumer for the quality of nursing care

rendered. Licensed nurses may use the services of unlicensed individuals to provide assistance with personal care and activities of daily living.

Q. What happens if I don't meet the requirements?

A. You must meet the requirements to renew your license. If you do not meet the requirements to renew your license, you may take a refresher course and reinstate your nursing license after completion of the course or after you attain the 20 hours of CE.